

# *Abellio Greater Anglia*

## *Annual Report to Customers*

### *Qualitative research*

### *Findings*

19 December 2014

# Context

*Annual Report explored as part of customer requirements of franchise*

**East Anglia franchise research commissioned by Passenger Focus**

**Objectives were to understand passenger experiences**

**Improvement priorities also identified**

**Annual Report to customers shown as part of research process**

**Respondents given 5-10 minutes to browse the report**

**Overall impressions and sections briefly discussed**

## **Method and sample**

*12 x 2 hour focus groups (and 5 depth interviews with disabled people)*

**Locations: London, Norwich, Ipswich, Cambridge, Chelmsford**

**User types: Frequent, infrequent and lapsed/non-users**

**Routes: Inter City, Main Line, West Anglia Outer, Rural, Stansted Express**

**Research conducted from 23 October – 4 November 2014**

**Report to Customers used as stimulus (one copy per respondent)**

# Initial reactions

*Not sufficiently compelling to engage consumers. Needs a stronger hook*

**No previous awareness in this sample**

**Assumed to be Financial Report**

**Customer focus overlooked**

**Low levels of claimed interest**

**Expect to be patronising / biased**

**Looks boring – flick through only**

**Assume to be dry/off-putting**

**Only read if on long journey**

**Expect to be online**



# Managing Director's message

*Tends to reinforce stereotypical perceptions of TOCs rather than creating impact*

## A message from the Managing Director

It gives me great pleasure to write the Introduction for our latest Annual Report to Customers, just a few weeks after joining Abellio Greater Anglia as Managing Director.

I am immensely proud to lead the team. My aim is to build on the achievements of the last two years, to further improve performance and customer service standards. In doing so, we will be looking to engage even more effectively with our customers and stakeholders, to help us meet their aspirations. I'm especially keen to embed a positive, customer-focused ethos throughout our business, including enhanced customer communication and more benefits from our alliance with Network Rail, to deliver a better service for customers and communities on a consistent basis.

With that in mind, I'm glad to update you on how we are progressing on the issues that matter to customers and stakeholders across our network.

The past year has presented its challenges, notably when train service performance was adversely affected by the Autumn storms. However, as I hope you will see from the content in this report, we have continued to invest in improvements to your services. And as we approach the end of the current short franchise in July this year, our commitment and resolve to you, our valued customers, will continue to inspire us to carry on doing all we can to deliver consistent, reliable and improving train service performance and excellent customer service.

Looking further ahead, we recently agreed a Direct Award contract with the Department for Transport (DfT) to continue operation of the Greater Anglia franchise until October 2016. After listening to your feedback and consulting with our stakeholders about the Direct Award, I am really delighted that we have been able to agree the implementation of a number of positive customer benefits that form part of the new franchise, including improvements to rolling stock, new and additional train services providing extra capacity and further investment in customer service.

The DfT intends to let the long Greater Anglia franchise from October 2016 and as the pathway towards the longer franchise is developed, we will engage and consult with stakeholders and our customers about the priorities for the future. We are also firmly committed to maintaining our pivotal role in making the case for major upgrades to East Anglia's rail network in the longer term.

I hope you will find the annual report useful and informative and I would welcome your comments and feedback.



Jamie Burles  
Managing Director  
Abellio Greater Anglia



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**Poor initial impression due to volume of text**

**Therefore likely to skip or dismiss altogether**

**Expect to be full of insincere platitudes**

**Feedback welcome but no contact details!**

**Important to show the human face of the company**

**Makes the report and TOC feel more accessible**

**Ideally bigger picture and less text**

**Only been in the job for a few weeks!**

**Creates an immediate credibility problem for some**

# Train service performance

*Would be interesting to compare with targets proposed in franchise bid*

## Train service performance

In the past year, we reported our best ever period of punctuality with 95.7% of all trains on time for the four-weeks ending 25 May 2013.

The year also presented a number of challenges, notably during the Autumn and early Winter period when bad weather affected performance, not just on our routes but across the entire rail network, with storms, fallen trees and flooding causing a number of problems. Over 200 trees were brought down in the storm on 28 October alone. The cumulative effect of the poor weather meant that our moving annual average (MAA) punctuality for the year ending 31 March 2014 was 91.7%. However, this result was better than the industry-wide MAA average for the year of 89.9%.

### Abellio Greater Anglia MAA punctuality

2011/12	90.0%
2012/13	92.3%
2013/14	91.7%

### MAA Punctuality by route group (up to 31 March 2014)

Metro & Southend	2013/14	93.0%
Metro & Southend	2012/13	94.1%
West Anglia	2013/14	92.7%
West Anglia	2012/13	92.6%
Stansted Express	2013/14	90.5%
Stansted Express	2012/13	89.6%
Mainline	2013/14	90.8%
Mainline	2012/13	91.2%
Rural	2013/14	88.9%
Rural	2012/13	92.1%

Although there was a slight decline in punctuality on the previous year (2012/13), the overall trends are encouraging when compared to 2011/12, when MAA punctuality was 90% in comparison to the current 91.7%.

Through our alliance with Network Rail, we are working ever harder to improve train service performance. Our performance and control teams work closely with their Network Rail colleagues to rigorously analyse all delays so we can deliver improvements by eradicating issues that cause delay, and when problems do occur, to learn lessons and implement robust contingency plans to aid service recovery.

A good example of our joint approach was the prompt collaboration to ensure the landslip that occurred at Brantham, near Manningtree on the London to Norwich mainline in February was promptly repaired and service disruption kept to a minimum.

Looking ahead, we became the first operator in the country to have a train fitted with new technology to help tackle the Autumnal problem of slippery rails caused by falling leaves. Two more of our trains are next in line to be fitted with this innovative new system, with a national roll-out expected to begin next year.

In March, we also announced new investment of over £1m to implement a joint performance action plan with Network Rail to raise performance standards, and deliver a better service for customers, despite being only four months from the end of the current franchise. We also worked hard with our partners to overcome issues that affected some of our rural and intercity services, whilst a number of our trains were undergoing repairs earlier this year.

Another benefit for passengers travelling on the Great Eastern Main Line (GEM), between Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester, Chelmsford and London, has been better weekend rail services. Under the improvement works schedule for 2014, there were only 8 full days planned at weekends where bus replacement services operated on the GEM - all before the end of March.



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Potentially interesting content since relevant to all

Natural inclination is towards summary graphic

Claimed to provide all information that most would require

Text claimed to be irrelevant

Likely to be due in part to time given to read report

AGA Annual Report

February 2015

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Some younger respondents questioned legitimacy of source

Assume data will be manipulated with a positive spin

Would be more interesting to see comparison of Abellio vs other TOCs

Some failed to notice only AGA routes shown

AECOM



# Customer service

*Honesty of showing decline in Autumn satisfaction figures appreciated*

Expect to be  
people-focused  
since about  
customer service

Gravitate towards  
visuals rather than  
text therefore

Non-users found  
details in copy more  
informative and  
interesting



Customer service

We have continued to work hard to raise customer service standards. Overall satisfaction amongst Abellio Greater Anglia's customers in the Autumn 2013 National Passenger Survey (NPS) was 80%, compared to 77% in the Spring 2013 survey.

In the Autumn 2013 survey, there was a decline in customer satisfaction across the rail industry compared to the equivalent Autumn 2012 survey, with bad weather a contributing factor.

However, the improvement we saw in the overall customer satisfaction for our Intercity route, with 91% of customers satisfied, is particularly encouraging and reflects some of the continuing efforts being made to further improve services.

We are working closely with our Customer Panel members who provide valuable input and feedback on issues such as timetables and service provision to better understand customers' needs and develop strategies for improvement.



Customer service training event

Our comprehensive training programme for managers and customer service staff is continuing, following its success in improving customer service on the network. More than two-thirds of our colleagues completed the tailor-made service training programme during 2013, which is being extended further in 2014.

The December 2013 timetable featured some notable improvements for passengers at Manea (on the Ipswich to Peterborough line) and Sawbridgeworth, responding to customer and stakeholder aspirations.

A record 653,000 passengers travelled on our East Suffolk Line train services last year, an increase of 11.5% compared to 2012 and double the number of passengers travelling on the line six years ago. This growth comes after the new hourly service was introduced on the line in December 2012.

Our thriving Twitter feed operated by our social media team continues to be popular with customers and has attracted over 37,000 followers.

However, attention  
almost always  
dominated by NRPS  
data

Need to show  
source more clearly  
and explain (to  
enhance credibility)

Transparency of data  
helps to create trust  
among customers

Would be better if  
AGA specific rather  
than industry figures

# Trains

*Interesting from a personal perspective rather than as an enthusiast*

**Reasonable level of interest in information relating to trains**

**Some dissatisfaction with current rolling stock so addresses an area of current concern**

## Trains

Further progress has been made in improving the condition of our train fleet. As part of their regular planned maintenance some of our trains including the Mark III Intercity coaches are being repainted, as a precursor to more substantial improvements to the customer environment as part of our new contract to October 2016.

Our electric multiple unit (EMU) trains based at Ilford Depot are being improved with the help of a new cleaning product which is restoring the trains' exterior paintwork. The new product is applied by hand and strips away any build-up of contamination such as embedded brake dust which affects the bodyside.

In partnership with Eversholt Rail and Wabtec, one of our Class 321 trains operating services to Braintree, Chelmsford, Clacton, Colchester, Harwich, Ipswich and Southend has undergone a high-specification refurbishment and upgrade and is running in normal service on the Abellio Greater Anglia network for a year. During this period, we are seeking passenger views on the many new features, which showcase how the trains could be upgraded, to help shape plans for future rolling stock enhancements on our network.

A similar initiative is also underway with Angel Trains to operate a "pilot" refurbished Class 317 train, which will be used to gain customer feedback and help prioritise possible future improvements to trains on the West Anglia routes between Ely, Cambridge, Bishops Cleeve, Harlow, Hertford East, Enfield, Chingford and London.



New seating on a Class 321 train.



An Intercity train in Abellio Greater Anglia colours.

The £3 million refurbishment and upgrade of our fleet of two carriage Class 156 trains, which are used mainly on services in Norfolk and Suffolk, is now complete.

## Stations

Stations have continued to be the focus of an extensive programme of customer-focused upgrades across our region. Major station improvement schemes are underway and progressing well at three of our busiest stations - Bishop's Cleeve, Cambridge and Chelmsford.

At Cambridge a £4.25m improvement will upgrade and renew the existing ticket hall, which will double in size and feature an open plan counter service, additional ticket vending machines and improvements to the customer information screens. New toilets are being built and other customer facilities enhanced. We are also working closely with Network Rail and CB1 developer Brookgate, to ensure that the proposals fit well with those for station square and the adjoining hotel and CyclePoint with capacity for 3,000 bikes.

**Many interested in seeing interior of proposed new train**



**But disappointed by rows of 3+2 seating that look narrow and uncomfortable**

**Would be cleaner to devote whole page to trains and start Stations section on next page**



# Stations

*Legitimate content but some disappointment if own station not mentioned*

High level of  
claimed  
theoretical  
interest

In spite of or due  
to current  
satisfaction with  
station  
performance

Encouraging  
to read about  
upgrades and  
improvements:  
- cycle point  
- TVMs  
- facilities

At Bishop's Stortford, work is continuing on the £1.8m redevelopment of the rail station, as part of the National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP). This scheme will provide an open plan booking hall area, a new ticket office and better facilities for buying tickets, with more automatic ticket machines, upgraded waiting room facilities, new customer toilets, improved customer information systems, CCTV and better lighting. A new, secure cycle compound opened at the station last year, jointly funded by Hertfordshire County Council and Abellio Greater Anglia. This new facility increased cycle storage capacity at the station to 238 spaces.



Work is also progressing on the NSIP scheme to improve Chelmsford station, as part of a £3.2m investment in customer facilities. The works include a new ticket hall with an open plan counter service, new toilets, improved customer information systems and additional retail units. There will also be significant improvements to access for the London bound platform. An additional stair tower is being built, linked to the existing stair tower, which will enable a better flow of people, especially at peak times. Access to the London bound platform in the main ticket hall is also being rebuilt in order to improve the space in the ticket hall and extend the gate line.



The new £680k CyclePoint at Chelmsford station with space for 1,000 bikes was opened in July 2013. Chelmsford is the first station in the region to benefit from CyclePoint which is a unique concept brought to the UK from the Netherlands by Abellio which combines secure cycle parking with increased capacity for cycles, supported by retail, cycle-hire and maintenance facilities in a single location for all cycle-related activity and parking at a station.

Passengers at Witham station are benefiting from improved facilities thanks to a project to install a brand new disabled toilet facility at the station. Similar new facilities have also been added at Audley End, Diss, Hockley and Lowestoft stations.

50 new benches - compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act - have been installed at stations across our network. Other stations have received new station wheelchairs for use when providing assistance to passengers who have mobility problems.

We have also installed 24 new help point telephones at stations, offering passengers better access to train information and advice, especially at unstaffed stations where the help point is invaluable for giving passengers information about their train services.

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Evidence of lower  
enthusiasm for this  
news in Ipswich

Less interested in  
hearing about what  
happening  
elsewhere on the  
network

Probably due to  
perceived need for  
investment at their  
local station

# Marketing

*Potentially interesting subject suffers from being low down on the page*

Sections will have more impact as one page (rather than two half-pages)

67 of our stations have now been accredited 'Secure Station' status for safety and security. The Secure Stations Scheme is directed by the Department for Transport and the British Transport Police and recognises good practice in implementing security measures at stations.

In a continuing and wide-ranging programme, cycle parking facilities are being improved at many stations, including secure compounds where entry is obtained via a key fob system.

Customers can now access free Wi-Fi in partnership with The Cloud at over 100 Abellio Greater Anglia stations.

Other specific improvements include:

- A programme to install new automatic ticket vending machines at Beccles, Saxmundham and Woodbridge on the East Suffolk Line and at North Walsham on the Norwich to Sheringham route was completed last year.
- A further extension to the car park at Diss station was opened, creating an additional 80 car parking spaces, by converting disused railway land and sidings to increase capacity.
- A range of improvements for our customers at Stratford station after completion of an overhaul of customer information, including new signage and a better public address system. Lighting and cleanliness has also been improved and new Oyster validators installed on platforms 9/10, 10A/11 and 12.
- New information screens installed at Tottenham Hale to integrate train and tube travel news for customers at this station, along with new ticket gates and other improvements.

Finally, through the adoption of a new Retail Strategy at stations we are working to improve facilities for customers offered by retail partners at stations. We recognise that customers' expectations of what they can purchase at stations are rising (as evidenced by research such as the National Passenger Survey), so the new approach is aimed at further raising standards across our network, providing benefits for rail passengers and retail tenants.

Minimal interest



Page positioning appears to indicate low importance

## Marketing

We have continued to work with our key partners such as Visit East Anglia and Stansted Airport on attractive marketing initiatives.

Stansted Express welcomed supporters travelling to the Champions League final at Wembley Stadium last May between Borussia Dortmund and FC Bayern, handing out souvenir 'Fußball Kommt nach Hause' (Football's Coming Home) badges to arriving fans of the German finalists.

Stansted Express has also introduced a new Business Plus ticket, perfect for the business traveller looking for increased value and the benefits of First Class travel, when travelling to and from Stansted Airport. We have also developed a similar Business Plus ticket for customers on the Norwich to London mainline services.



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Sponsorship activity claimed to be of low relevance

Information on following page feels like an afterthought

# Community

*Interest in CSR correlates with extent of perceived personal / local benefit*

**Responses  
somewhat mixed  
across the sample**

**AGA involvement in  
activities mentioned  
welcomed in principle**

**But should be on  
website rather than  
used as a publicity  
vehicle**

AGA Annual Report



New low cost 7 Day and 30 Day advance tickets for travel on Stansted Express are proving very popular with over 20,000 of the latter sold in the first few weeks since launched. And in-bound passengers arriving at Stansted Airport can now purchase Visitor Oyster Cards for the first time from the Airport ticket office.

We are continuing to work closely with Visit East Anglia to promote travel and tourism in the region and the 2For1 London Attraction offers are proving as popular as ever. Mobile and Print-at-Home ticket options have also been extended, and a new Advance ticket and season products developed for our Cambridge to London route.

Promotion of products such as Duo, Groupsave and the range of popular Advance tickets has continued apace, as part of the marketing development of good value fares for our customers.

## Community

Working positively with the local communities across the region we serve is a key priority for us at Abellio Greater Anglia.

Examples of good practice helping to brighten-up our stations and improve the environment are the station murals created at Frinton-on-Sea, Hoveton & Wroxham and Reedham.

Our thriving station adopter scheme celebrated 10 years of support for the local rail operator last June, and community volunteers came together to commemorate the anniversary and share ideas and initiatives which have been successful at their stations. Adopters from the region were also congratulated at the annual Station Adopter Awards. Last year's winners were: Cantley, Colchester, Cromer, Frinton-on-Sea, Melton, Newport, Reedham, Shelford, Southminster, Thorpe-Le-Soken and Walton-on-the-Naze.



A newly decorated 'Brecks' train was launched in July. Abellio, Greater Anglia and The Brecks Partnership 'wrapped' a Class 170 train used on the Norwich to Cambridge route through the Brecks in enticing images, to promote this area of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Abellio Greater Anglia has been integrally involved in the development of the East Anglian Rail Prospectus and the subsequent work to build the case for upgrades to the Great Eastern Main Line.

**Resistance  
compounded by  
relevance issues**

**Minimal interest in  
reading about  
network locations  
outside own  
immediate area**

**Some reluctance to  
hear about how  
others benefitting  
from AGA's  
benevolence**

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**AECOM**



# Our people / Connecting people

*Feels a bit like back-patting and padding at the end of the report*

More appropriate content for a staff magazine than the Customer Report

Or could be included in the Customer Service section

Minimal interest among users and non-users

## Our people

A number of Abellio Greater Anglia employees have been recognised for excellent customer service and outstanding endeavour.

In 'mystery shopping' surveys, some of our employees have consistently scored 100% top marks. Customer service and quality standards at stations are assessed on a regular basis as part of our ongoing commitment to deliver customer service excellence.

Ipswich station cleaner Steve Mew was named Abellio Greater Anglia's Star of the Year when he acted promptly to intervene and help care for a distressed passenger. And Simon Pready and Tony Ellis both received Abellio Group achievement awards for their innovation and leadership.

Norwich-based conductor Gary McDonald and Ipswich driver Stephen Sheeran both received British Transport Police certificates of commendation for their bravery in detaining a threatening member of the public.



## Connecting people

We've improved connections for onward travel at our stations with better bus, cycle and taxi integration.

We teamed up with Anglian Bus and Suffolk County Council through the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership to launch a new integrated rail and bus service linking Halesworth station with Southwold.



A combined bus and train ticket has also been launched for residents and visitors to Saffron Walden, in collaboration with Essex County Council, Uttlesford District Council and local bus operators.

In partnership with Suffolk County Council, a major transport integration project was completed at Lowestoft station, greatly improving public transport connections and car parking.

15 stations on our network are now part of Bike & Go, the UK's first major station cycle hire programme. Providing low cost, rapid and convenient cycle rental, Bike & Go will be available at 50 stations across the Abellio-operated Greater Anglia, Merseyrail and Northern Rail networks. Customers can obtain more details at: [www.bikeandgo.co.uk](http://www.bikeandgo.co.uk)

Another pioneering initiative is our new Cab & Go taxi booking service, which has been extended to more stations after a successful pilot phase. Cab & Go is a new, free app and website which lets rail passengers book a taxi to or from the station.

For more information or to download the app visit [www.abelliogreateranglia.co.uk/cabandgo](http://www.abelliogreateranglia.co.uk/cabandgo) or [www.cabandgo.com](http://www.cabandgo.com)

CAB&GO



Content too thin to justify a dedicated section

Could be combined with Our people

# Awards

*This format should be used as the template for future Customer Reports*

## Awards

Generally thought  
to be interesting  
(and surprising)

Seems a shame  
to be tucked away  
on the inside  
back cover

Especially since  
many unlikely to  
get this far in  
reality

Abellio Greater Anglia won a number of rail and transport industry awards during the year ended 31 March 2014.

We're proud to receive such recognition for our 3,000 employees. The main awards include:

- Cross-Industry Partnership Award at the 2013 Rail Innovation Awards for impressive performance and customer service standards at the London 2012 Games;
- Judges' Special Award for gold performance in Summer 2012 at the 2013 National Rail Awards;
- Achievement in Customer Satisfaction Award at the 2013 British Quality Foundation's UK Excellence Awards;
- Three Cycle Rail Awards at the 2013 National Cycle Rail awards for Best Customer Service, Partnership Working and Station of the Year (for Chelmsford);
- Public Transport Operator of the Year Award at the 2014 London Transport Awards - Abellio Greater Anglia was recognised for 'delivering significant improvements' from February 2012;
- Gold Investor in People status for Abellio Greater Anglia's Customer Contact and Operations Teams and Silver for the Revenue Protection Team.

Majority of comments  
focused on  
presentation rather  
than content

Universally  
regarded as a  
considerable  
improvement

Bullet-point style felt  
to be more attractive  
and accessible than  
paragraphs of text



The Revenue Protection Team receiving the Investors In People Silver Award.

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# Annual Report to Customers - summary

*Opportunity for improvements that may help build relationships in future*

**Low enthusiasm initially**

**Not acknowledging commuter relationships**

**Not building relationships with less frequent users**

**Can impact positively on perceptions of trust**

**- honesty with performance data**

**Greater transparency would help**

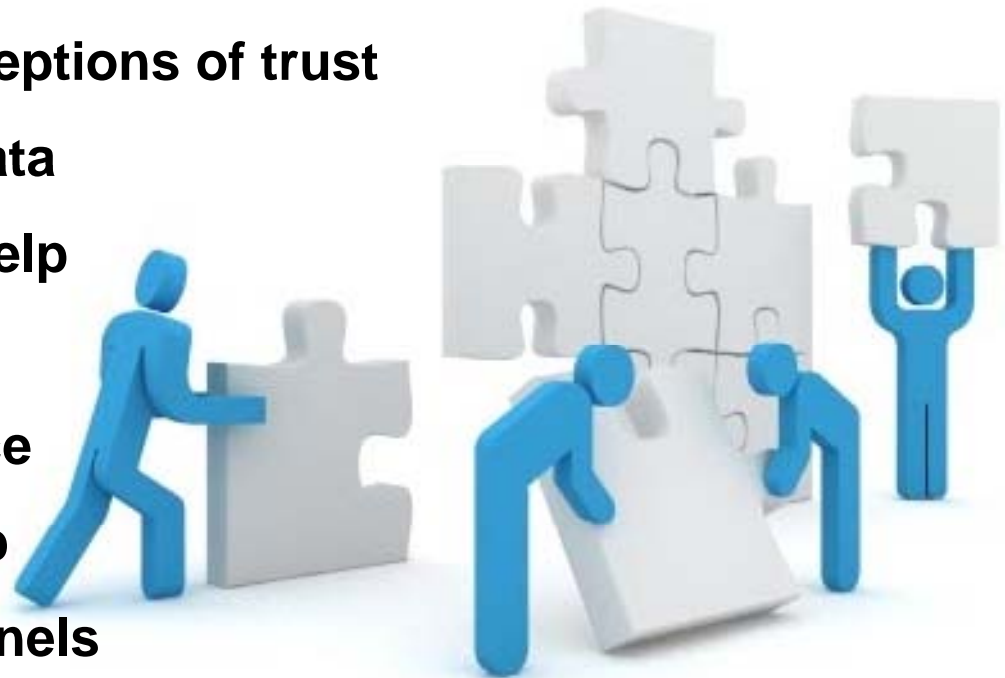
**- comparison with other TOCs**

**Interest may relate to relevance**

**- reporting by route could help**

**Worth considering other channels**

**- online / on trains / hand-outs at stations**



# Reflections on the Abellio Greater Anglia Annual Report

*There's too much emphasis on them patting themselves on the back about how well they've done and it's only at the end that you get more human stories that are a bit more interesting*  
*[London, Main Line]*

*Calling it an Annual Report makes me think that it will be full of statistics and that it would be boring so I wouldn't want to read it*  
*[London, Main Line]*

*I don't care whether Bishop Stortford has got a combined train and bus ticket, the only thing that's of interest is the punctuality table and the customer satisfaction bit*  
*[Ipswich, Main Line]*

*It doesn't tell you how they have performed compared to what they said they were going to do when they took over the franchise, which would be interesting*  
*[Ipswich, Main Line]*